

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

FEA-01 IO-10 OES-03 ERDA-05 NRC-05 ACDA-05 OMB-01

SIL-01 LAB-04 /098 W

----- 059712

R 100324Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 315

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 3015

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT NZ

SUBJ: NEW ZEALAND ELECTIONS

REF: A) WELLINGTON 2931 DTG 030524Z OCT 75;

B) WELLINGTON 2989 DTG 080534Z OCT 75

1. SUMMARY - ELECTION CAMPAIGN GAINED MOMENTUM DURING PAST WEEK AS PM ROWLING ANNOUNCED INTENTION SPEND THREE WEEKS IN QUOTE MEET THE PEOPLE UNQUOTE TRAVELS IN ADDITION TO PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED THREE WEEK FORMAL CAMPAIGN. LABOUR'S EMPHASIS ON MARGINAL SEATS WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY ANNOUNCEMENT ROWLING WOULD VISIT HAMILTON, LOCATION OF TWO MARGINALS, ONCE EVERY TEN DAYS UNTIL ELECTION. NATIONAL PARY LEADER ROB MULDOON PREDICTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT NATIONAL WOULD WIN ELECTIONS WITH WORKABLE MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING OCTOBER 7 CALL BY AMBASSADOR AND VISITING EA/ANP COUNTRY DIRECTOR SQUIRE, MULDOON, SELF-ASSURED AS USUAL, PREDICTED NATIONAL PARTY WOULD OBTAIN A WORKABLE
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MAJORITY OVER LABOUR IN NOVEMBER 29 ELECTIONS. HE WAS

PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH INFORMAL POLLING EVIDENCE HE DISPLAYED INDICATING YOUTH VOTE WOULD FAVOR NATIONAL. (REFTEL B).

3. MAJOR ELECTION NEWS DURING WEEK WAS PUBLICATION OF SCHEDULE FOR THREE WEEK QUOTE MEET THE PEOPLE UNQUOTE TOUR BY PM ROWLING BEFORE FORMAL LABOUR CAMPAIGN OPENS. ORIGINAL LABOUR CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN SET FOR THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO ELECTION WITH NATIONAL UNDERTAKING FOUR WEEK EFFORT. IN FACT, KMPAIGN IS MORE OR LESS IN FULL SWING WITH PARLIAMENT DUE TO RISE OCTOBER 11 AND LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES OUT ON THE HUSTINGS. IN ADDITION TO ROWLING AND MULDOON, PARTIES ALREADY ARE SENDING SENIOR SPOKESMEN INTO MARGINAL AND SEMI-MARGINAL AREAS TO REINFORCE LOCAL CANDIDATES. MULDOON REMAINS MAJOR CROWD GETTER AND EXPECTS 7,500 TO ATTEND WEEKEND SPEECH NEAR AUCKLAND. THIS WOULD BE LARGEST CROWD IN NZ POLITICAL HISTORY. BY CONTRAST ROWLING DREW UNDER 2,000 TO OCTOBER 8 SPEECH IN AUCKLAND ELECTORATE OF EDEN.

4. THAT BOTH PARTIES ARE CONCENTRATING ON MARGINAL SEATS IS EMPHASIZED BY ROWLING SCHEDULE WHICH CALLS FOR APPEARANCES IN HAMILTON AN AVERAGE OF ONCE EVERY TEN DAYS UNTIL ELECTIONS. NATIONAL PARTY WILL KICK OFF ITS FORMAL CAMPAIGN IN HAMILTON WITH MAJOR MULDOON ADDRESS NOVEMBER 4. THE TWO HAMILTON SEATS ARE NOW HELD BY LABOUR WITH MAJORITIES OF 397 AND 544.

5. COMPLETION OF PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS HAS SEEN ALL NIGHT SITTINGS AND FRAYING OF TEMPERS AS LABOUR PUSHES THROUGH NUMBER OF BILLS. CONTROVERSIAL COMMERCE BILL AND VOTE ON SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET HAVE TAKEN UP MOST OF PARLIAMENT'S TIME, WITH NATIONAL BRINGING UP NUMEROUS OBJECTIONS TO BOTH. GOVERNMENT HAS DROPPED, FOR THIS SESSION, MUCH CRITICIZED UNEMPLOYMENT BILL. IN ADDITION TO DEBATE OVER LEGISLATION, MEMBERS ON BOTH SIDES OF HOUSE HAVE MADE STUDIED EFFORT TO EMBARRASS LEADERS OF RIVAL PARTIES WHO HAVE BEEN ABSENT CAMPAIGNING SEVERAL TIMES DURING WEEK.
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6. ECONOMIC NEWS WITH POLITICAL BITE INCLUDED SPEECH BY PRESIDENT OF FEDERATED FARMERS, ANNUAL MEETING OF MANUFACTURERS FEDERATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT THAT REPUBLIC OIL CO. HAS STRUCK SMALL COMMERCIAL OIL FIELD. SPEECH BY FED. FARMERS PRESIDENT KNEEBONE WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT. KNEEBONE SAID COUNTRY WAS IN SERIOUS STATE OF RECESSION DISGUISED BY MASSIVE BORROWING AND

CONTINUATION OF OVER-PROTECTION OF INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, MANUFACTURERS' MEETING COULD NOT BE TERMED UNFAVORABLE TO LABOUR. BOTH ROWLING AND MULDOON SPOKE AT MEETING WITH MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM BEING THEIR POSITIONS ON OVERSEAS BORROWING. FEDERATION PRESIDENT LAIDLAW SOUNDED OPTIMISTIC NOTE FOR LABOUR BY TELLING ASSEMBLAGE BORROWING WAS BEST ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE, AND BY FOCUSING ON HOW BEST TO MEET BOMM PERIOD HE SAID WOULD INEVITABLY FOLLOW RECESSION. ANNOUNCEMENT BY REPUBLIC OIL WILL HAVE MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL THAN ECONOMIC EFFECT, BUT SHOULD IN ANY CASE BE HELPFUL FOR GOVERNMENT.

7. MULDOON HAS HAD RUNNING BATTLE WITH ORGANIZED LABOUR SINCE TAKING OVER PARTY LEADERSHIP AND USUAL TENOR OF SPEECHES HAS BEEN ON NEED TO CONTROL IRRESPONSIBLE UNIONISTS. HOWEVER, AT MANUFACTURERS' FEDERATION MEETING HE SHIFTED FOCUS BY PRAISING FEDERATION OF LABOUR (FOL) PRESIDENT SKINNER FOR HAVING EXERCISED RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP DURING PAST YEAR. THIS CHANGE PROBABLY REFLECTS DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIBLE UNIONISM WHILE LETTING MULDOON MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON FOL MILITANTS. IT MAY ALSO REFLECT INSIDE INFORMATION ABOUT OPINION POLL RELEASED OCT 8 WHICH INDICATED NEW ZEALANDERS PREFER MODERATE, RATHER THAN TOUGH, GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

8. DEFENSE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS WERE LITTLE TOUCHED UPON DURING WEEK ALTHOUGH ROWLING DID SPEAK OUT AGAIN ON SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR RENT ZONE OCTOBER 3 (WELLINGTON 2952). MEDIA TREATMENT WAS LOW KEY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975WELLIN03015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750352-0459
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751063/aaaacenc.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 WELLINGTON 2931
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 03 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW ZEALAND ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, NZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006